

**LYNCHBURG CITY COUNCIL
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING HIGHLIGHTS
Tuesday, September 10, 2013
9:00 a.m.**

Attendees: Vice Mayor Ceasor Johnson, Mayor Michael Gillette, ex-officio

Staff Present: Kimball Payne, Bonnie Svrcek, Lee Newland, Don DeBerry, James Talian, Greg Poff, Gaynelle Hart, Kent White, and Starlette Early

Others Present: Alicia Petska (News & Advance)

Contract Awards:

There were no recent or pending contract awards to report for this month.

Update on Priority Projects:

Mr. Newland noted several changes on the capital priority projects:

- The Wards Road Pedestrian Trail Crossing Phase 2B was advertised and all bids exceeded the budgeted amount. Currently looking at adjusting the design and will possibly re-bid the project.
- Midtown Connector notes contained a typographical mistake: should have indicated Fort Avenue to open in October, rather than Park Avenue.
- Signal improvements at three intersections (Edgewood/Fort, University/Evans, Oak/Rivermont) are all underway; one is almost complete with others waiting on delivery of steel poles.
- Wards Road Bridge repairs- traffic was switched last week and is on schedule to open late October.

Vice-Mayor Johnson inquired about work at Park Avenue. Mr. Newland indicated work in this location was part of the Midtown Connector, and they were working on Park to get it ready to go, with next stage of project at Langhorne, and then to the round-about at intersection of both those streets.

General Business:

Since a quorum was not present for this meeting, Vice- Mayor Johnson inquired whether the items for General Business required action from the full committee. Mr. Newland indicated the first item (James River Interceptor Update) was an informational update, and the second item (Fort Avenue Road Bike Facility Striping Plan) required guidance from the committee. Vice-Mayor Johnson indicated he would proceed with the meeting as scheduled.

- a. James River Interceptor Update -- James River Interceptor construction is proceeding on schedule. Division 4 was recently completed. Division 3A should be complete this year. Division 3B through Riverfront Park will begin after January 1, 2014, resulting in closure of Riverfront Park for all of 2014. Funds from the \$30 million state grant will initially be available around January 1, 2014 at the award of the Division 3B project. Status of other CSO activities is also presented.

James Talian, Water Quality Manager, presented an update (see attached report for a detailed status of each project), on the James River Interceptor—the main sewer line running down the riverfront. He specifically noted status of the following current activities:

- JRI Division 3A Project at Jefferson Street (located between Washington Street and Horseford Road) has had things closed up for a while, but is on schedule and expected to be completed by end of this calendar year. There have been significant change orders of approximately \$550,000 due to discovery during tunneling of previous industrial development remnants; unfortunately there were no historical findings, but plenty of various concrete remnants due to iterations of development requiring additional work and expense.
- JRI Division 4 (located behind Griffin Pipe) had similar issues due to discovery of remnants left behind from previous industrial development. This unforeseen work delayed project by two years and increased cost by \$1.5 million. Mr. Talian noted these additional costs were appropriate as the contractors or the City could not have known about these buried remnants during the bidding process.

Mayor Gillette inquired about the excavation process required to eliminate debris when the work space prohibits access to the site. Mr. Talian noted a 36 inch diameter pipe at Division 4 made the work particularly challenging, along with issues surrounding location of remnants directly underneath the railroad tracks. He stated they have closely monitored billing statements from the railroad to verify all charges are directly related to maintenance from the City's project.

Mr. Talian noted other work proposed for next year, JRI Division 3B, will result in closing the entire length of Riverfront Park for the calendar year 2014. Using a map, he pointed out the route of the 3B project, indicating the most difficult part of the work will be behind Amazement Square where they will need to do a short tunnel underneath the railroad.

Mayor Gillette questioned potential street closures at several locations. Mr. Talian confirmed Jefferson Street would not be closed again (following its opening at completion of current work related to Division 3A) for this project. Traffic on the 9th Street Bridge would not be affected and an access would always be maintained to the skate park at either 10th Street or 11th Street. However, Horseford Road would be closed entirely for a few months at some point during the year for construction of an extended water line. Mr. Talian confirmed Friday Cheers would lose its entire season at Riverfront Park, and stated Parks and Recreation is coordinating with Lynch's Landing for alternative venue options.

Mayor Gillette questioned the possible disturbance of special planting features already in place in this area of work. Mr. Talian responded an irrigation system would be affected but they would skirt most of the unique plantings. The stage area would be unaffected. Mayor Gillette asked if this project has a tie-in with Bluff Walk. Mr. Talian indicated they were coordinating work for this project with engineers working on Bluff Walk; however, there were no anticipated construction efficiencies with Bluff Walk.

Mr. Talian acknowledged the biggest traffic impact will be to parking behind Amazement Square. He noted work will begin at this end in order to get the area completed and re-opened as quickly as possible. After that, it will be at the contractor's discretion to determine how the remainder of the project will be accomplished.

Mr. Payne reflected on the incredible accomplishment this project entails, noting the James River Interceptor spans from Judith Creek, up the river, and back down to the Waste Water Treatment Plant and was installed in the 1950's. It has lasted at least 10 years beyond its expected lifetime. Replacement of a pipe this size through barriers such as the river, the old canal, the railroad track, and the bluff with limited working space is an enormous task and represents a significant milestone. He noted this pipe serves as the "spine" of the sewer system and this work had to be done; however, the City will not have to be back in this area for another 100 years.

When questioned about funding for this project, Mr. Talian reported funding was already in place through the \$30 million CSP State Grant. Mr. Talian further explained the DEQ has agreed to allow the City to back charge costs related to change orders in Division 3A, but will not open up this pool of funding until a larger project is initiated. The Division 3B project will serve as this initiator once awarded in December/January 2014 and the grant will provide funding for this project and enable costs already fronted for change orders in the earlier projects to be reimbursed.

Mr. Talian noted several other projects planned for this year (part of both the new and old CSO program): a small separation project near Main Street and the Expressway, an interceptor project in an off-road area near Mayflower Drive, and the installation of a green parking lot (pervious pavement and a rain garden) on Taylor Street across from the water treatment plant.

Mr. Talian provided an update on the CSO Long Term Control Plan's (LTCP) proposed revisions. He reported The LTCP revisions were proceeding through DEQ on a much slower timeframe than hoped. DEQ did not want us to schedule things in a manner where they were not involved. A bacteria Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) analysis will be re-done, with public meetings scheduled this fall. This process looks at bacteria from sources other than the CSO (i.e. agriculture, septic tanks, pet waste control, etc.) that contributes to storm-water management.

Discussion of the work at Rivermont Avenue (at Riverside Park) detailed eminent plans for final paving and striping for a bike lane. The road is expected to be re-opened by end of next week. Completion of Aragon Street is scheduled for September, and work at James Street is schedule for completion by June 2014. Maintenance of the water and sewer systems will be on-going, but using a different method than under the control of the current CSO. However, until a new program is approved, we are bound by the requirements of the current CSO.

- b. Fort Avenue On Road Bike Facility Striping Plan -- As Fort Avenue is resurfaced and restriped upon completion of Midtown improvements, staff has prepared a plan to add lane markings and separate bike lanes to the roadway where the existing pavement width allows. This proposal covers the area from Park Avenue to Wythe, and adds sharrows from Wythe to Memorial. As recommended in the approved Region 2000 Bike plan this restriping plan eliminates on street parking on one side of Fort Avenue to accomplish the addition of the bike lanes for both sides.

Don DeBerry, City Traffic Engineer, noted this issue was revisiting a PDC item from July 2013 in which the committee requested a better graphical description to review the proposal. He indicated the newsletter in the packet would be used for public communication should they receive guidance from the committee to move forward to a public hearing to discuss the proposed revisions. The newsletter is designed to provide a detailed project description along with a map showing the changes citizens could expect if the bike lanes are implemented, including the areas of proposed loss of parking. An additional map shows how this bike lane on Fort Avenue connects with other trails and proximity to locations bike riders might want to travel. They hope to schedule a public meeting in early October to review this proposal. The map graphic in the lower right of the newsletter would be customized to show changes and effects to each individual block and presented at one of seven (7) stations at each block during a single public information session.

A discussion of the availability of current parking along Fort Avenue from Park Avenue (at Kemper) to Wythe and how the bike lane impacts those spaces clarified a net loss of 58 spaces along this stretch of roadway. The highest block impacted is a total loss of 31 current spaces on the east side. The overall impact is a reduction of 153 spaces down to 95 after the lanes are implemented.

Mayor Gillette inquired about available data to support parking usage/demand for this stretch of roadway. Mr. DeBerry indicated a formal study has not been conducted, but observational data suggests there is very little parking usage except during special events. The parking areas in front of homes are utilized, but none of those would be affected by this proposal. Mayor Gillette suggested Council would likely want some form of supporting data to justify losing a third of the parking along that corridor. He was open to options of how an accurate measurement might be collected but felt Council members would ask the question. Mr. Payne suggested meeting with the community was also an important step in the process.

Mr. DeBerry stated a study was manageable, but depending on the type of measurement could be costly. Mayor Gillette felt just getting a sense of the numbers related to usage at different times of the day and on different days would be sufficient to capture whether there were any “red flags” to research in more detail.

Mr. DeBerry inquired if the data should be brought back to PDC, or if they could proceed with scheduling a public hearing based on their findings. Mayor Gillette indicated the Chair may request additional review but felt PDC did not need to be consulted on every step of the process. Vice-Mayor Johnson agreed it was appropriate to collect the necessary supporting data and move the proposal forward.

Mayor Gillette indicated his primary concerns regarding the bike lanes were the design for safety and connectivity. He recognized disjointed sections would connect over time, but wanted to make sure the connectivity was a priority of the project.

Roll Call:

There were no items for roll call.

Next meeting: October 8, 2013